LABOR MARKET EXPERIENCES OF THE FOREIGN BORN:

AN ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL ORIGIN DIFFERENCES

IN EMPLOYMENT STATUS FROM 1980 TO 2000

by

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ABSTRACT

Much of the existing research on the economic assimilation of post-1965 immigrants relative to the native born has revolved around earnings. The earnings differential is a helpful measure of inequality as it indicates the amount of resources an individual or group has for socio-economic well-being, but it still limits our complete understanding of immigrants' economic incorporation and more specifically, their labor market experiences. Added to this, assimilation is not a uniform process. I evaluate one of the key assertions of segmented assimilation theory by examining national origin patterns of labor market integration, for post-1965 Latin American and Caribbean immigrants' changes in employment status over the period 1980 to 2000. Segmented assimilation theory posits that assimilation can be downward, especially in disadvantaged contexts, conventional as in upward mobility, or partial. Using repeated cross-sections of the 5% IPUMS USA decennial Census samples of 1980, 1990 and 2000, the study assesses changes in the likelihood of being unemployed or out of the labor force as opposed to employed over the course of 1980 to 2000, for pooled cross-sections of working age immigrants relative to US non-Hispanic Whites and native minorities. Emphasis is placed on measuring the effect of national origin and duration of residence on employment status while controlling for the Census year, demographic and human capital factors. Results show that all foreign born have lower risks of nonparticipation

than the native majority and native minorities over their course of US residence. Higher labor force participation, however, does not translate into higher likelihoods of full labor market integration. Differentials in labor market integration actually follow a downward assimilation pattern for foreign born Mexicans and Guatemalans/Hondurans/Nicaraguans as their risks of unemployment increase with longer US residence and are similar to native minorities of Hispanic origin. Foreign born Jamaicans' risks of unemployment also mirror those of native Hispanics, thus suggesting a propensity for downward assimilation as well. Foreign born Cubans appear most likely to assimilate conventionally as their risks of unemployment approach parity with the native majority over their duration in the US. Hence, upward and downward assimilation trajectories in labor force attachment depend on nationality.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The economic integration of immigrants in the United States is an essential dimension in the overall assimilation process. This age-old interest has taken on deeper meaning amongst post-1965 immigrants to the United States as these immigrants have been coming from predominantly lesser developed countries of Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia. Additionally, economic restructuring of the United States has resulted in economic bifurcation that has significantly altered the labor market experiences and socio-economic profiles of native and immigrant minorities in the US (Jaret 1991; Portes and Rumbaut 2001).

The typical approach is to assess the extent to which immigrants achieve parity with the native majority population in the labor market primarily on the basis of earnings. Scholars have also utilized other indicators, such as occupational attainment and labor market sector placement; job mobility; employment and its stability; underemployment; and earnings from self-employment (Chiswick 1983; Portes and Stepick 1985; Model 1995; Sanders and Nee 1996; Portes and Zhou 1996; Borjas 1999; Funkhouser 2000; Wilson and Jaynes 2000; DeAnda 2000; DeJong and Madamba, 2001; Bean, Lowell and Leach 2004). The earnings differential is a helpful measure of inequality as it indicates

the amount of resources an individual or group has for socio-economic well-being, but it still, arguably, limits our complete understanding of immigrants' economic incorporation and more specifically, their labor market experiences. Whereas many existing studies examine the labor market incorporation of immigrants from Latin American and Caribbean as a single unit (Duleep and Regets 2002) or examine one Latin American or Caribbean country relative to the native majority and/or minority groups (Model 2008), in this study I disaggregate the countries from this region and examine a few of them as separate populations relative to both the native majority and minorities. Further, rather than examining unemployment only as an indicator of labor market participation, I examine working age immigrants' nonparticipation in the labor force in an effort to capture the impact that this outcome has on the overall economic incorporation of immigrants from this region.

The characteristics of immigrants are usually derived from cross-sectional data such as censuses and surveys, although a few studies have made use of longitudinal data (Duleep and Dowhan 2002; Lubotsky 2007, see also Duleep and Dowhan 2008 for more detailed reviews). Overall, the results of these studies are mixed. Some studies show that, on average, immigrants to the US, regardless of nationality, succeed in the labor market as well as natives with longer duration of residence in the United States. Others show, however, that immigrants do not assimilate to natives over their time spent in the US and this is contingent on the country of origin (Borjas 1999; Portes and Rumbaut 2006). This paper builds on existing empirical work by examining the importance of national origin to employment status. Specifically, I assess whether the employment trajectories of

immigrants of different nationalities become similar to the native majority and minority populations over their time spent in the United States.

Post-1965 immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean have not been homogenous. These are two separate regions with much within and between country heterogeneity in immigrant flows. Latin American immigrants in this study refer to those who originate from countries where Latin languages, specifically Spanish, are the mother tongue. These countries are represented by Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Cuba. Jamaica represents the specific Caribbean origin country for this study. The final selection of countries for inclusion in this study is based on sample size in the Census across the two decades; their variations in historical migration to the US; and their socio-political connection to the US, which influences both motivations for emigration to the US and reception upon arrival. Mexican and Jamaican immigration is represented by predominantly economic motivations. However, particularly towards the end of the 1980 decade and onward, Cubans, Guatemalans, Hondurans and Nicaraguans have been more on the political end of the motivational spectrum as either state-sponsored refugees, in the Cuban case, or asylum seekers in the case of the latter three Central American nationalities[1] (Chinchilla and Hamilton, 2007).

[1] Chinchilla and Hamilton 2007, 333-334. Very few Guatemalans and Nicaraguans were granted asylum during the 1980s. Nicaraguans, however, were granted Temporary Protected Status under the 1990 Immigration Act which allowed then to remain in the U.S. until about 1996 due to civil war in their country. This was further extended in 1999 and included Hondurans, following a natural disaster-Hurricane Mitch. Also in 1990 a landmark legal decision required a reopening of all cases for Guatemalans who were denied in the 1980s. The 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act included more requirements for applying for a stay of deportation. The 1997 Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act permitted Salvadorans and Guatemalans who had been in the U.S. since 1990 to apply for a stay of deportation while simultaneously cancelling deportation for Nicaraguan and Cuban arrivals before 1995. Nonetheless, Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Hondurans and Haitians have largely been unable to benefit from these laws. Nicaraguan and Cuban immigrants have been more lawfully advantaged.

This paper examines the differential process of integration into the US labor market over 1980 to 2000 as a function of the national origin of Latin American and Caribbean immigrants and their duration of US residence. Labor market integration is understood as the strength and stability of immigrants' connections to employment such that they eventually attain near or complete equality with natives' work orientations (Lofstrom 2002; Piche, Renaud, Gingras, Shapiro 2002; Blau, Kahn, Papps 2007). In this study I consider two aspects of labor market integration over the duration of US residence: 1) decreasing likelihood of being unemployed as opposed to employed and 2) decreasing likelihood of being out of the labor force versus employed. Nonparticipation in the labor force can be seen as representing having neither a desire nor need to participate; being unable to participate either due to disability, familial obligations such as childcare, or school enrollment; or, simply being discouraged, and hence withdrawing, from the labor market. Efforts have been made to focus the nonparticipation category on those who became discouraged in their labor force participation over the 1980 to 2000 period by setting age restrictions on the sample to account for working age persons that are pre-retirement, and by the inclusion of appropriate controls. Being unemployed is seen as involuntary joblessness as persons are actively looking for work but are unable to secure a job and fulfill their desire for labor market integration. Being employed is understood as being fully integrated into the labor market as it indicates stability. Recognizing that labor market integration is a process that may be time-dependent, immigrants' movements toward full integration over the course of the two decades are measured by reductions in both involuntary joblessness and nonparticipation over time.

The underlying questions guiding this research are: will there be similarity in the patterns of labor market integration of Latin American and Caribbean immigrants and the native born non-Hispanic White population within the time-frame under study? Are there differences in labor market integration for immigrants from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Cuba, Jamaica and other nations of the Latin American and Caribbean region over their duration of residence? And, will patterns of labor market integration of the foreign born be closer to those of native minorities as opposed to the native majority?

Statement of the Problem

According to the US Census Bureau, between 1970 and 1990 the total foreign born population hailing from Latin America, which includes the Caribbean and both Central and South America, increased from 1.8 to 8.4 million (Gibson and Lennon 1999). Relative to the size of Caribbean and Central American immigrant streams, immigration from South America had been historically low, until the 1970s, when the fall out of modernization and industrialization in many countries, among other factors, spawned mass emigration. During the decades of 1980 to 2000, however, immigration to the US became most pronounced (Waters, Reed, and Marrow 2007). By the year 2000, the foreign-born population hailing from the Latin American region accounted for 51 percent of the total foreign born population, with Central America (inclusive of Mexico) representing 34.5 percent, the Caribbean 9.9 percent, and South America 6.6 percent (Lollock 2001). These figures demonstrate that the flow of migrants from this region of the globe has been persistent since the 1965 immigration reformation. During 1980 to

2000 as well, the proportion of foreign born in the US labor force grew from 5.2 percent to 17.3 percent (Newburger and Gryn 2009).

The primary argument of this paper is that national origin is one of the determining factors in the process of labor market integration. National origin captures several factors which are crucial to integrating into a foreign labor market for Latin American and Caribbean immigrants, such as the quality of education in sending countries; the extent of US involvement in origin societies (Yang 1995, Waters et al. 2007); the implementation of preference categories[2]; racial, ethnic, linguistic and cultural nuances; and resources available upon arrival. Each of these factors has influenced inter-country variation in the size and type of immigrant flows and their adaptation to the host country. These contexts ultimately promote or dampen migration and influence immigrants' levels of preparedness for the demands of adjustment to US society (Yang 1995; Portes and Rumbaut 2006). It is critical to note that differences in immigrants' labor market outcomes can be attributed to differences in personal characteristics upon entry, which may be enhanced with longer duration in the US, coupled with differential rates of death and return migration by national origin.[3] Both sorts of differentials can

[2] Massey, Durand and Malone 2002; Yang 1995. First preference was given to unmarried sons and daughters of US citizens, then spouses and unmarried sons and daughters of U.S. resident aliens; artists, scientists and professionals; married sons and daughters of U.S. citizens, brothers and sisters of US citizens; skilled and unskilled workers in short supply and lastly refugees.

[3] Ahmed and Robinson 1994 estimate the emigration of the foreign born population as of 1980, between 1980 and 1990. They applied a residual methodology to estimate the number of emigrants and the emigration rates for the foreign-born population that entered before 1980. These estimated rates were then applied to the 1990 enumerated population to estimate emigration from 1980 to 1990. They find that immigrants entering between 1970 and 1979 had the highest percentage of emigration- 19 percent between 1980 and 1990 and the lowest, 7 percent, for those entering before 1960. When broken down by race and country of origin, emigration for Blacks (Africa as a whole) was 20 percent and Hispanics (Argentina, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Colombia, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Bolivia, Chile, Venezuela and Spain), 8 percent. When including other Black (Haiti, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago) and Hispanic countries (Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador and Peru) the overall emigration rate is 14 percent for Blacks and 7 percent for Hispanics. Overall an estimate of 1.95 million foreign-born emigrated between 1980 and 1990.

impinge on the size and composition of the different immigrant populations captured as unemployed or not in the labor force in any census year and thus account for differences between national origin groups.

The other main argument of this paper is that much of the existing research on the economic assimilation of immigrants relative to the native born has revolved around earnings differentials, and while valuable, this offers an incomplete picture (Chiswick, Cohen and Zach 1997). Using earnings as a focus of analysis arguably limits our complete understanding of immigrants' economic incorporation and more specifically, their labor market experiences. Overall, immigrants' earnings and employment levels are lower relative to US natives' during the initial years of entry. However, their earnings and employment levels tend to grow over time spent in the US, with convergence to natives' levels being achieved for most groups, whereas some groups come to exceed natives with similar education and experience. The latter is particularly the case among East Asians (Waters and Eschbach 1995).

The major shortcoming of these studies is the use of cross-sectional data (Chiswick 1978, 1977), and synthetic age cohorts across Census periods (Borjas 1990), which result in differing conclusions on the likelihood of economic assimilation to natives. Added to this are issues of variable selective return migration across national origin groups[4] (Bean and Stevens 2003). When selective return migration of the lowest

[4] Bean and Stevens 2003, 125-26 discuss the limitations of different methods. Chiswick's earlier studies used cross-sectional wage profiles by age, which arguably biased the results as age composition differed by national origins and younger immigrants had lower wages and earnings because they were coming from lesser developed countries. Analysis of earnings using synthetic age cohorts is arguably limited for not accounting for the varied ages at arrival and examining a cohort at a later period, exaggerates wage differentials because they include recent arrivals whose wages are typically lower. Longitudinal analysis (Lubotsky 2000) that accounts for return migration also biases results in favor of immigrants employed in higher tier occupations with higher earnings and further exaggerates the native-immigrant gap in parity.

(earners is taken into account, immigrants' earnings growth relative to natives' is still much lower (Duleep and Dowhan 2008). This suggests that immigrants who possibly have more economic motivation to stay in the US are still less likely to assimilate to natives' earnings and employment levels.

Differential rates of earnings growth among and between groups, either racial/ethnic or national origin, do not adequately capture variations in employment status. If particular groups display stagnant or slow earnings' growth relative to others, it may be due in part to differences in their degree of labor market integration over and between given periods of time. This lack of integration into the labor market may be voluntary, as individuals exercise control over their labor market participation, which is shaped by familial obligations, cultural expectations or values, and economic need or lack thereof. Lack of integration can simultaneously be involuntary. Employers' stereotypical views about certain national origin groups can pose a hindrance to hiring so that members of such groups may be involuntarily without a job. Additionally, depending on the industry in which one is searching, the demographic supply of workers and demand for certain skill sets can work against the individual seeking a job if they do not fit labor market needs. Improvement in earnings is contingent on being fully integrated into the labor market- consistently employed- and subsequently experiencing some mobility in the occupational structure.

Individuals from particular national origin groups may show greater likelihoods of weak integration, unemployment and being out of the labor force, at particular points in time. This may be due in part to human capital and social capital impairments that limit success in job seeking. Recognizing weak integration helps not only to understand their

economic trailing on the majority group, but also their potential for being confined to poverty as immigrants are not granted benefits of welfare programs (Fix, Passel, Enchautegui and Zimmerman 1994). Weak labor market integration may limit a group's accumulation of savings and hence their ability to provide for later generations of immigrants, inclusive of their own children, seeking to develop their human capital and move up in the occupational structure. Such findings would speak to differences across immigrants groups' economic stability and subsequent wealth accumulation.

Additionally, earnings growth is unmistakably tied to the stability of gainful employment. This brings to bear another possible constraint on earnings growth - the quality of jobs that one holds over time. Confinement to lower skilled and/or unskilled sectors characterized by lower wages with higher turnover rates and limited opportunities for mobility, relative to primary sector employment, will impair convergence to natives' earnings. This has been the case particularly for Latin American immigrants generally (Canales 2007) and specifically amongst foreign born Mexican men and women (Bean and Stevens 2003).

Explanations for variation in economic incorporation between national origin groups can range from differences in individual characteristics, to localized labor market conditions, and return migration patterns. To date, to the best knowledge of the researcher, no study has examined changing employment status among Latin American and Caribbean immigrants and, how their employment statuses differ from the native majority and minority population, by disaggregating nationalities, despite their continuous stream to the United States.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section outlines the theoretical framework for the study of immigrants' labor market integration over approximately 30 years in the United States. The widely recognized theories explaining minority-majority differences in employment include human capital (Becker 1964), industrial restructuring (Jaret 1991, Browne 1997) and assimilation (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). The latter has been more explicitly associated with immigrants[5] and will be the focal perspective guiding this study.

Whether immigrants become fully integrated into the labor market or not may be a reflection of their degree of assimilation into the host society, which may be due in part to immigrants' characteristics. New immigrants are expected to have an initial disadvantage in the US labor market because they may have less information about local labor markets and specific marketable skill sets to meet job demands. Conventional assimilation theory, which assumes that assimilation is linear both within and between generations (Parks and Burgess 1921 and 1924; Spiro 1955; Gordon 1964; Glazer and Moynihan, 1970, 1975), proposes that immigrants' initial disadvantages will weaken and disappear over time as they become more attuned to cultural nuances of the host society

[5] Theories of social capital or social disarticulation are also posited and tested in the sociological camps to explain differences in labor market outcomes but will not be tested in this study. It is worthwhile to mention that differences in social ties may be exerting significant influence on the differences in employment status for different national origin groups. This is included in the discussion section.

(Rumbaut 1999; Alba and Nee 2003). Thus it is expected that immigrants' participation in the labor market will improve with time as they make efforts to fulfill the classical assimilation expectations of improved life chances for themselves and their off-spring. Support for these arguments has come from research (Warner and Srole 1945; Glazer and Moynihan 1973; Greeley 1974) on pre-1965 immigrant adaptation which showed positive assimilation patterns in terms of foreign-born groups' degrees of participation in US institutions and the cultural milieu of the host society (Sieu 1990, Rumbaut 1999). In the present study the question is raised, do the odds of labor market integration improve for immigrants over the course of US residence regardless of their national origin, race or ethnicity, and endowments of human capital upon initial entry?

More contemporary theory- segmented assimilation- argues against these underlying assumptions of unidirectional incorporation for all, recognizing that contextual factors mediate individual efforts to improve life chances both within and between generations. Thus, other avenues of assimilation are possible such as partial assimilation and downward assimilation within and between generations as well. In this study both perspectives of assimilation in the labor market are assessed but generational differences are not distinguished.

Segmented assimilation theory recognizes that assimilation processes are not of a "one size fits all" nature. This more recent body of scholarship emphasizes the differences in individual and contextual factors that exert influence on the extent to which the foreign-born are integrated into the host culture (Portes and Stepick 1985; Rumbaut 1999; Alba and Nee 2003; Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Entry into and progress in a new labor market for the foreign born is arguably contingent, primarily, on the human capital

that the immigrant brings to the US. According to segmentation theorists the body of education, work experience and language fluency with which the immigrant arrives is critical to their economic integration (Portes and Rumbaut 2001). Minority and immigrant groups, generally, have lower stocks of human capital relative to the non-Hispanic White majority.[6] This echoes the human capital perspective that higher educational attainment and English fluency both upon entry and maintained throughout the course of US residence will place the immigrant in a more advantageous position in the labor market. This advantage, however, depends on the immigrant group as immigrants' stocks of human capital vary by national origin.

For instance, between the 1960s and 1980, many immigrants from Mexico possessed low levels of education by US standards (Massey, Durand and Malone 2002). Pioneer Jamaican (and other West Indian immigrants) and Cuban immigrants during the 1970s were more highly educated and professionally skilled relative to post 1980 arrivals from the same countries (Harris 1994; Mitchell 1997; Waters 1999; Perez 2007). Central American immigrants have flowed according to a social ladder with the upper classes, who are usually more educated, typically leaving first, followed by the middle classes and lastly, the masses of the working class who were relatively uneducated and in some cases illiterate (Mitchell 1997)

[6] Even those whose educational credentials are on par with the majority, face challenges in securing employment that is commensurate with their education (Edwards, 1979) and also earn less than non-Hispanic Whites (Chiswick 1986) due to labor market discrimination. Generally, African Americans and Puerto Ricans have been the bearers of labor market constraints following economic restructuring in the 1980s (Tienda and Stier 1996). Among Spanish speaking groups, Cubans have held highest rank in the economic ladder with Mexicans and other Central Americans occupying the lower rungs (Rumbaut 1995). Central Americans generally have lower human capital relative to Cubans and hence are relegated to lower tier occupations if they are employed. The Black-White gap in unemployment and earnings has narrowed since the 1980s but an increasing number of African Americans remain unstably employed or unemployed (Jaret 1991; Waters and Eschbach 1995; Bean, Leach and Lowell, 2004).

There are notable socio-economic differences between Guatemalan, Honduran and Nicaraguan immigrants, largely attributable to differences in human capital. First-generation Nicaraguans, by the year 2000, were more likely to be employed in skilled or professional positions, producing median family incomes around $40,000. This contrasts to the production employment that characterizes Guatemalans and Hondurans, which is consonant with median family incomes near $36,000. By 2000, Nicaraguans also showed a greater proportional advantage in English speaking abilities and higher education credentials compared to Guatemalans and Hondurans (Chinchilla and Hamilton 2007). These intracountry variations in human capital at entry are crucial to bear in mind when accounting for group differences in patterns of employment status at entry and over time.

Existing research that has assessed education as a dimension of stratification between minorities- immigrant and native alike- and majority Whites in the United States indicates that education is important for seizing labor market opportunities, but gaining employment and returns to education are mediated by one's ascribed statuses of ethnicity, skin complexion and gender. For instance, Tienda and colleagues (1992) show that even Puerto Ricans with postsecondary education need further education to attain employment levels comparable to White women. However, skin color poses a more damaging penalty among the less-skilled. The results of this study suggest that there may be a discriminatory hiring queue in certain labor markets where the influence of education is conditioned by race and Hispanic origin. Examination of the influence of ethnicity, race and human capital on labor force activity (Tienda and Stier 1996) also indicates that despite both Mexicans and Puerto Ricans being more educationally disadvantaged than

non-Hispanic Whites, the former have higher labor force participation and lower likelihoods of job separation once they are employed.

Later studies endorse the importance of higher human capital, in terms of education, but gaps in both the level of education achieved and the returns to education still remain between Whites and minorities and among minorities (England, Garcia-Beaulieu and Ross 2004; Read and Cohen 2007). For example, Schoeni's (1998) assessment of the labor market outcomes of immigrant women from 1970 to 1990 revealed a widening gap in earnings and employment when compared to US born women and among particular groups of immigrants. This observed gap was largely attributed to variation in human capital. For example, Filipina women were most likely to be employed and have higher earnings while Mexicans had lower earnings and employment, a pattern attributed to lower educational attainment in the latter group. DeAnda (2000) supports this by showing that Mexican-origin women with less than or equal to 12 years of education are more likely to be unstably employed compared to co-ethnics with a college degree. Additionally, Mexican immigrant women are more unstably employed compared to US born Mexican women. This emphasizes the importance of level of education the immigrant holds upon entry to positive labor market outcomes at entry and over time. Immigrants with higher levels of education upon entry are more likely to display conventional assimilation patterns.

Pre-immigration educational attainment in and of itself, however, can present a barrier to achieving economic parity with natives (Bratsberg and Ragan Jr. 2002). For the foreign-born, the place of schooling matters a great deal to one's labor market experiences. Education attained in one's home country can be devalued in the US,

leading some highly-educated immigrants to underemployment. This has been found among Latin American and Eastern European immigrants (Mattoo, Neagu and Ozden 2005) and lower earnings relative to White and native-born workers of similar ethnicity have been shown for foreign-educated Asians (Zeng & Xie 2004). Mattoo and colleagues (2005) attribute the lack of transferability of foreign-education to structural and social conditions in the sending country prior to immigration.

The degree of transferability is also argued to be a function of the level of economic development of the source country as immigrants from similarly economically developed countries tend to have earnings similar to US natives (Duleep and Dowhan 2008). Lower employment among recent immigrants relative to natives can also be attributed, in part, to their preference to invest in building host-acceptable human capital (Chiswick, et al. 1997), which has been shown to have positive effects on earnings growth rates over the course of U.S. residence[7] (Duleep and Regets 2002). Lower initial earnings, arguably, prompt the desire to improve one's stock of human capital. More recent research shows that between generations, educational improvement is the most prominent factor benefitting economic progress, particularly for U.S. born Mexicans (Bean and Stevens, 2003).

The degree of English fluency is another measure of human capital that specifically captures immigrants' challenges in the labor market. This has been shown to be of gross importance in explaining differences in occupational characteristics (earnings and full-year employment) between Hispanic and non-Hispanic males (stronger positive

[7] Using decennial Census data from 1970 to 1990, showed that immigrants who initially show lower earnings at entry due to lower transferability of source country skills display faster earnings growth over time in the US. Additionally, the inverse relationship between entry earnings and earnings growth is most robust for immigrants from Asian, Central and South American countries.

effect for the former), and in explaining absolute and relative earnings[8] differentials of immigrants from English speaking versus non-English speaking countries. Immigrants from English-speaking countries showed higher mean hourly earnings compared to natives (Stolzenberg 1990; Chiswick, Le and Miller 2006); the precise reasons for the outcomes are not clear and will require more detailed investigation.

The value of one's human capital to positive outcomes is mediated by other contextual factors. Contextual factors that influence immigrants' assimilation outcomes, more specific to this study- their economic incorporation- refer to contexts of reception by the government, host society and co-ethnics in destination communities. These contexts all vary by national origin for immigrants entering the US following the 1965 Act and in large measure dictate the avenues though which immigrants can maximize their human capital. Thus, depending on one's national origin and human capital endowments upon arrival, the pace and extent of economic incorporation will be different for any given immigrant. The influence of the differing contextual factors will not be directly tested in this thesis, but it is still important to highlight these differences across nationalities. These inherent group differences provide the structural context for assessing and interpreting group differences in economic assimilation.

Of the Latin American and Caribbean countries examined in this study, immigrants entering the US from Mexico and Cuba, in particular, have come as a result of the influential, albeit controversial, nature of political and economic relationships with the governments of these countries. Immigration from Mexico is the most long-standing

[8] Chiswick, Le and Miller (2006). The authors used a quantile regression model of earnings. The results of which showed that immigrants from non-English speaking countries experience smaller earnings disadvantages at lower deciles of the earnings distribution, attributed to minimum wage effects and above the 6th decile of the distribution earnings disadvantages are halved. Among immigrants from English speaking countries, their earnings are higher than the native born at and beyond the 6th deciles.

owing to implementation of the *bracero program*[9] which intended to fulfill social, political and economic goals for the United States during the World War II era. Mexican labor migrants have long filled an economic void in the US economy, providing low-wage labor in labor intensive sectors such as agriculture, construction and services. Mexican immigrants have primarily been labor migrants, equipped to work in occupations typically assigned at the lower end of the occupational ladder (Mitchell 1997; Massey et al 2002). Simultaneously, this long-standing stream of migration to the US can also contribute to building stocks of social capital and such networks have been shown to aid the economic progress, as per wages, of Mexicans both documented and undocumented (Aguilera and Massey 2003).

Mexicans' economic progress, however, is mediated by immigration policy reforms- namely the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 and the Immigration Act of 1990. The former Act has been argued to have significant bearing on labor marker experiences of immigrants generally and in the case of Mexico, has spurned more undocumented migration, increased discrimination and lowered wages (Phillips and Massey 1999). As a share of the total foreign born population in the US, the stock of unauthorized foreign born Mexican immigrants increased from 8 percent in 1980 to 11 percent in 2000. Nonetheless, it must be noted that Mexican migration to the US has largely been legal as the share of unauthorized Mexican migrants relative to the total Mexican foreign born population remained relatively the same from 1980 to 1990 – 50-54 percent and declined to 36 percent by 2000 (Bean and Stevens 2003). This is

[9] Massey et al (2002). This refers to a program that recruited Mexican laborers, initially intended to span the war period 1942-1945 but continued until 1964 as economic cycles fluctuated after the war. It ended in response to the Civil Rights coalition that advanced the human rights of Mexicans coupled with U.S. agriculturalists who grew dissatisfied with the program.

important to note because undocumented immigrants do in fact respond to Census surveys (Passel and Woodrow 1984), are more likely than documented immigrants to settle where their legal compatriots are already established (Model 2008), and are more likely to be employed in secondary sector and seasonal industries (Lowell and Suro 2002).

In the case of Cuba the US opened its doors to these emigrants as a means of undermining the political power of the government in this country (Harris 1994, Mitchell 1997). Upon entry to the United States, the earlier arriving Cuban immigrants (1959-1973)[10] were granted a host of governmental and civic programs that aided in their structural assimilation and subsequent successful economic adjustment.[11] These included bilingual education programs and retraining services for former professionals, among other services that were offered by the Cuban Refugee Program instituted by the federal government (Harris 1994). This unparalleled reception by the US government allowed a smooth transition for pioneer Cuban immigrants of the early 1960s and 1970s. These pioneer immigrants, arguably, have laid a solid foundation for later arriving co-nationals because of the unsurpassed successful ethnic economies they established. Settlement in ethnic enclaves has been shown to aid the economic progress of Cubans as kin support

[10] Perez, Lisandro (2007, 390-93) Describes four waves of Cuban immigration to the US since the current government took hold in 1959. The first wave took place between 1959 and October 1962 with approximately 200 000 individuals. The second wave began in the fall of 1965 and ended in 1973. Cuban immigrants between 1965 and 1974 numbered 247, 726. The third wave- Mariel boatlift refugees of 1980 and the last wave in 1994 were also refugees but was most atypical as they faced significant barriers of entry to the US but were eventually admitted.

[11] Harris (1994) Drawing from a case study of racial-ethnic relation in Miami, Harris notes that Cuban immigrants displaced many Black natives in Miami with regard to employment because of their willingness to work for low wages. "…..in 1963 it was estimated that over 90 percent of the area's garment industry workers were Cubans…" (82) Harris further documents that by 1986, Hispanics owned and operated near 30 banks and nearly 16 0000 area businesses at the expense of Black owned businesses.

increases the likelihood of stable employment for later immigrants (Portes and Stepick, 1985).

Guatemalans, Hondurans and Nicaraguans were fleeing (typically entering undocumented) relatively worse circumstances of oppressive regimes, political instability and lower economic development relative to that of Cuba and Mexico that resulted from US involvement (or lack thereof) but were not offered similar favorable treatment. Rather, asylum seekers from these countries were denied settlement and refugee status continuously and sometimes forcibly returned. Added to this relatively hostile reception was a dearth of preexisting ethnic communities, in stark contrast to Cuban political immigrants (Chinchilla & Hamilton 2007).

Jamaican immigrants typically enter legally through authorized visas and also have very successful close-knit ethnic communities in the Northeast, where the majority settles (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Self-employment is also characteristic of the Jamaican immigrant population (Vickerman 2007). Like Cubans, this foundation can assist in positive labor market experiences. Support, whether governmental or social, plays a role in one's access to resources that may impinge on adaptation to the host society and subsequent success at integration, be it social or economic integration.

Segmented assimilation theory further argues that race is a central feature of American culture such that darker complexioned immigrants experience more challenges in translating their qualifications into positive outcomes (Waters 1999, Portes and Rumbaut 2001). This in some measure influences their reception by the host society. Thus the pace of assimilation is also a function of the degree of "ethnocultural and above all racial difference from the dominant group" (Rumbaut 1999, 17). Reception of the

foreign-born is contingent upon natives' attitudes toward the national origin group and the extent to which the immigrant is perceived as an ethnic minority and one of a particular type. An example is in the case of Asians being referred to as "model minorities," a stereotype which plays a role in structuring opportunities for success (Bean et al. 2004; Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Natives' receptions of Mexicans have been mixed throughout the history of Mexican immigration to the United States. The same holds for Central American migrants, though their large-scale interaction with the native population is more recent relative to Mexicans (Massey et al. 2002; Chinchilla and Hamilton 2007).

Jamaicans, who are also predominantly Black, are likely to experience race-based discrimination that parallels African Americans' experiences and previous research suggests they personally juggle ethnic and racial identity distinctions daily (Waters 1999, Vickerman 2007). The extent to which they can minimize discrimination, however, either through avoidance or by ethnic identification as West Indian, Afro-Caribbean or Jamaican, may have positive bearing on their labor market experiences and subsequent economic incorporation. Earlier research has shown that Black West Indian immigrants settled predominantly in Black American communities, historically, and are more dominant in the Northeast region of the United States (Garcia 1986). They are arguably absorbed into the Black American community, but their incorporation into the wider U.S. society is questionable.

Incorporation of West Indian immigrants into the larger U.S. society presents some shades of grey when we examine patterns of socio-economic mobility. Earlier scholars, for example Bryce-Laporte (1978), noted lower income and socio-economic

gains of West Indians relative to white ethnic groups. This was attributed to the changing economic structure of the United States from the 1970s onward (change from manufacturing and industrial sectors to more service-oriented industry) which has disadvantaged Caribbean migrants, especially those moving to the Northeast regions (Garcia 1986). Other earlier studies (Chiswick 1979) show an opposite economic outcome for West Indians relative to African Americans, with the former group earning higher incomes than the latter; however, this outcome is contingent on the length of residence in the United States (Model 1995). English-speaking, Caribbean-born Black immigrants have also been shown to be successful in business, professions and education relative to other ethnic minority groups, both immigrant groups from other developing nations of the Western Hemisphere and Black Americans (Garcia 1986).

More recent scholarship shows mixed outcomes for Caribbean immigrants as some Spanish and French speaking groups experience declining socio-economic outcomes. As a result, their economic status eventually comes to resemble that of native Blacks (Kalmijn 1996); while at the other end of the spectrum English speaking foreign-born West Indians have witnessed more positive outcomes that actually surpass those of native Blacks (Model 1995, 2008).[12] This ambivalent incorporation of West Indian immigrants, who are largely Black by phenotype, raises questions of the importance of national origin, the command of English, and race, to labor market incorporation and

[12] Model. S. 1995. The author assessed labor force participation and earning of residents of the New York SMSA in 1970, 1980 and 1990, comparing native and foreign born West Indians with African Americans, concluded among other findings, that West Indians assimilate, economically, to African Americans rather than whites. Model shows all other variables being equal, the earnings of the foreign born surpass African American earnings only after the immigrants have spent some years in the United States, while the earnings of native born West Indians are usually higher than those of native Blacks. Also in the 2008 publication, Model conducts separate analyses for men and women and finds that West Indian men outperform female counterparts.

subsequent economic assimilation. In this study only national origin, represented by Jamaica, will be directly assessed.

Gainful employment is further mediated by employers' conceptions of a particular national origin group from which racial and ethnic status is not always mutually exclusive. Differential hiring is influenced by employers' categorizations of minorities such that this type of discrimination may constrict workers to low-wage jobs or exclude them completely from the labor force if they are considered unemployable (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Among ethnic minorities, natives and immigrants alike, employers have been reported to have preferences for immigrant labor, specifically West Indians over African Americans in New York City (Waters 1999). This type of immigrant preference over native ethnic minorities has also been observed in other U.S. cities (Waters and Eschbach 1995). The extent to which native minorities' unemployment is contingent on immigration flows, however, is inconclusive because of the bimodal distribution of immigrants' human capital, the share of immigrant flows from particular regions or countries, the industry in which employment is being assessed, and even patterns of domestic migration (Wilson and Jaynes 2000). Nonetheless, this does not discount the influence of employers' hiring practices based on their preconceptions of minorities and immigrants, and more so, based on combinations of race, gender and national origin.

The explicit racial-ethnic difference of the majority of post-1965 immigrants may present problems for assimilability even from entry into the United States and may superimpose limitations on the products of conventional assimilation and distort the overall well-being (specifically economic) for members of some immigrant groups. Group differentials in earnings and job quality across national origins are, arguably, a

reflection of the challenges, or lack thereof, that immigrants face in accessing and securing employment. Thus to capture the full meaning of earnings as they relate to socio-economic status differences and the economic adjustment of immigrants, we should first unpack employment patterns by assessing changes therein, over time.

The existing research on economic assimilation of the foreign-born relative to natives speaks to issues of the self-selection of immigrants and their differences in quality of human capital by national origin, social capital, and the influence of gender, race and ethnicity. Even after accounting for human capital factors- education, English fluency, and age as a proxy for work experience, the propensity for minorities to have higher unemployment and nonparticipation remains. Further, some immigrant groups are expected to fare better than others due to existing evidence on the differential returns to human capital. It is expected that nationality and minority status will be significant determinants of involuntary joblessness and nonparticipation among immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL EXPECTATIONS

Existing empirical findings on immigrants' economic assimilation and historical differences in migration flows offer individual expectations of odds of employment, with substantial variation by national origin. *In line with conventional assimilation, an initial immigrant disadvantage is expected with the most recent immigrants having higher odds of being unemployed and out of the labor force, controlling for human capital, nativity and racial/ethnic identification*. This disadvantage is expected to decline with longer duration of U.S. residence as immigrants, regardless of national origin, become more attuned to the nuances of the U.S. labor market, accumulate U.S. work experience and possibly develop broader social networks attached to different labor markets.

In contrast, segmented assimilation theorists provide two hypotheses to more directly capture the importance of national origin to differences in employment status. The first proposes downward assimilation. This is exemplified by persistent disadvantage in socio-economic outcomes leading immigrant groups to assimilate into the underclass as their economic standing approaches that of native minorities'. This avenue of assimilation depends on the immigrant group's contexts of reception into the host society and their racial/ethnic distinction, with negative contexts creating the potential for downward assimilation. In contrast, expectations of conventional, or upward, assimilation

are attached to national origin groups with more favorable contexts of reception and individual capital.

In this study downward assimilation is exemplified by increasing or persistently higher odds of being out of the labor force and unemployed as opposed to employed, relative to the native born non-Hispanic White population. Immigrants are also argued to be gravitating downward if they having similar odds of weak integration as the native minority population with longer stay in the US. Conventional assimilation will be demonstrated by lower odds of being unemployed and out of the labor force, relative to the dominant group, over the two decades under consideration.

Following from segmented assimilation theory, I expect to find significant differences in unemployment and nonparticipation and different labor market incorporation trajectories among the foreign born according to national origin status. Differences by nationality are expected to show that *relative to native born non-Hispanic whites, immigrants from Mexico, as well as Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, will have widening gaps in their likelihood of being out of the labor force and unemployed over time. In other words, these groups will exhibit patterns of downward assimilation relative to the native born non-Hispanic White population as well as Cubans and Jamaicans*. Immigrants from these Central American countries are expected to be less likely to overcome the intervening obstacles of negative contexts of reception by both the government and host society, a disadvantage that, coupled with their lower stocks of human capital and distinct ethnic identification, bodes poorly for economic incorporation. Guatemalan and Honduran immigrants, more so than Nicaraguan immigrants, have not

benefitted from asylum policies. Thus their greater odds of unauthorized legal status will impinge on their employability (Chinchilla and Hamilton 2007).

More conventional, or positive, assimilation is anticipated for *immigrants from Cuba and Jamaica, with hypothesized relatively narrow and narrowing gaps in the risk of unemployment and nonparticipation in the labor force over the analysis period relative to the native non-Hispanic White population and Central American immigrants.* Jamaicans do have to battle with their racial distinction and the possibility of race-based discrimination in the U.S. labor market, but the evidence to support Jamaicans' negative labor market experiences has been quite inconclusive. Jamaican national origin comes with inherent advantages of English fluency, both written and oral, and favorable contexts of reception both in the form of passive acceptance by the U.S. government, as exemplified by authorized visa allocations, and close-knit ethnic communities (Vickerman 2007). This makes positive labor market integration more likely because these immigrants are expected to have easier access to mainstream labor markets upon entry relative to immigrants without these endowments. This work experience can have a cumulative effect in the labor market and serve to decrease the likelihood of subsequent unemployment and nonparticipation. For Cubans, economically successful and stable ethnic enclaves, coupled with government support, provide the foundations for positive assimilation, in particular greater propensity to successfully integrate into the labor market and avoid unemployment and nonparticipation.

The human capital argument predicts that persons with *high levels of human capital, immigrants and natives alike, will show lower odds of being unemployed and out of the labor force throughout the time period under study relative to those with lower*

levels of human capital. This is largely attributed to U.S. economic restructuring from the 1980s that has most highly favored those in the labor market with higher human capital. Therefore, for the 1980 to 2000 period, one can expect to find that every additional level of education closes the gap in one's odds of being unemployed and out of the labor force. It is worth noting that the present study does not specifically assess the extent to which unemployment and nonparticipation gaps widen or narrow for specific immigrant groups with different levels of education over 1980 to 2000. In this study, levels of human capital are determined by levels of educational attainment and English proficiency.

Race and ethnicity are also expected to account for variation in labor force attachment based on societal and employer preconceptions of different racial and ethnic groups. In the general working-age population it is anticipated that for *persons identified as Black and those of any Hispanic origin, odds of unemployment and non-participation will surpass the majority non-Hispanic White population.*

CHAPTER IV

METHODS

Data for this analysis are drawn from three years of decennial Census data provided by the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series-USA (IPUMS-USA). IPUMS-USA is an integrated archival database of nationally representative samples of the US Censuses from 1850 to 2000 (Ruggles, Sobek, Alexander, Fitch, Goeken, Hall, King and Ronnander, 2008). I use a combined dataset of the 5% Census samples of the US Population in 1980, 1990 and 2000. The final analytic sample is based on an extracted 10 percent random sample of the majority population, Non-Hispanic Whites, and represents all native and foreign born working age persons between the ages of 25 and 59 years. This approach produces a sample size of 4, 715, 466. The sample weights were adjusted to produce the descriptive analysis of the full sample. Multivariate analyses, are based on a 10 percent sample of the Non-Hispanic White sample, but utilized the full sample for every other racial/ethnic and national origin category.

Using multinomial logistic regression, I assess the simultaneous odds of being in one of three employment status categories – employed, unemployed, or out of the labor force. Emphasis is placed on measuring the effect of national origin, arrival cohort and duration of residence on employment status while controlling for economic cycles as

represented by fluctuations in national unemployment rates in 1980, 1990 and 2000,[13] demographic and human capital factors.

The dependent variable, employment status, is comprised of three nominal categories: employed (combines civilian and those in active duty in the armed forces); unemployed (those currently not working but actively seeking work in the previous week of data collection) and not in the labor force (i.e., retirees, students who have no other occupation, people permanently unable to work, and people who simply choose not to work or to look for work). Employed is chosen as the omitted category for multivariate analyses. The employed status does not distinguish between part-time and full time workers thus simplifying the conclusions made about the extent of labor market integration for the foreign born relative to natives. In the context of this study, it matters most that immigrants were as likely as natives to secure a job, whether full time or part-time for both groups, at the time of census enumeration. Efforts have been made to focus the last category - not in the labor force - on capturing those who simply choose not to work or to look for work. Recognizing that choosing not to work can be sensitive to gender, based on family circumstances particularly, separate analyses, not reported here, were conducted for men and women.[14]

[13] According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the national average unemployment rate was 7 percent but it dropped to 5.6 percent in 1990 and by 2000 it dropped even further to 4 percent. The unemployment rate in 2000 was at its lowest since 1970. http://www.bls.gov/cps/prev_yrs.htm

[14] Full multinomial models of employment status for men and women which include the presence of children in both models, showed that women with at least 1 child present in the household were 1.3 times as likely to be out of the labor and 1.2 times as likely to be unemployed relative to women who had no children present in the household. In contrast, men who had one child present in the household were 53 percent less likely to be out of the labor force and 23 percent less likely to be unemployed relative to men with no children in the household. This suggests that if women have children in the household they are more likely to be out of the labor force compared to men with children. This may be a choice on the part of women but simultaneously it could be a result of difficulty in re-entry to the labor market. Nonetheless, children pose a gendered effect.

The independent variables are drawn from theory, as outlined above, and have demonstrated significant explanatory power in previous models of labor force participation, occupational attainment and earnings. *Age* and its square, to allow for changes in human capital investment over the individual's work career, are used as a measure of working experience as individuals are expected to gain more experience with age. *Educational attainment* is measured as the highest level of education completed at the time of the Census. The categories include less than high school, which includes no formal schooling, preschool through middle school, or some high school; completed high school as per completion of the 12^{th} grade or passing an equivalency test (reference category); some college (1 to 3 years of college) and advanced degree (4 years of college or more, including advanced/professional degree). *English language proficiency* is also categorical with Only-English speaking as the reference group. The other categories of English proficiency are speaks English very well; speaks English well; does not speak English well; and does not speak English at all.

Nativity and ethnic minority group membership combines both the native and foreign born.[15] It includes the following groups: U.S. born Non-Hispanic Whites (the reference group); U.S. born Non-Hispanic Blacks; U.S. born Non-Hispanic Other race (NH American Indian and/or Alaskan Natives, NH Asian and Pacific Islander and Other

[15] This variable, along with the duration of US residence, was adjusted to account for foreign born persons who were born abroad to at least one US parent and thus counted as citizens. As such they did not have a corresponding duration of US residence in the 1980 Census. For instance in 1980 there were persons indicating their birthplace as Mexico but who had no duration of US residence and were US citizens at birth. These persons were thus included as US born Mexicans by nature of their citizenship status. Similarly, foreign born Jamaicans, Cubans, Guatemalan/Honduran/Nicaraguan, Other LAC were included as native born Blacks, Cubans, Other Hispanics, and other racial groups, respectively. This was necessary to ensure that all three Censuses were as consistent as possible with the 1980 universe of persons who were supposed to identify their duration of residence. In 1980, only foreign born persons were allowed to indicate their duration of residence but for 1990 and 2000, foreign born persons and persons born in US outlying areas were to indicate how long they have been in the US.

non-Hispanics); U.S. born Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, U.S. born Cubans; U.S. born Other Hispanics. These categories represent the major native ethnic minority groups in the United States who have ethnic and racial identification corresponding to the immigrant sample. Hispanic and non-Hispanic subgroups were aggregated for parsimony. The foreign born groups are based on the reported birthplace of respondents. Analysis of the foreign born is limited to the Caribbean nations: Cuba and Jamaica; and the Central American nations: Mexico, and a combination of Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua[16]; and other Latin America and Caribbean which accounts for residual nations of Central and South America and the West Indies. The final selection and aggregation of countries for analysis was determined by consistency of adequate sample sizes in each Census year allowing for efficient multinomial regression. Additionally, immigrants from the delineated countries can be roughly categorized, on the aggregate level, into economic migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, based on their subsequent reception by the U.S. government. Economic immigrants are characterized by Mexicans and Jamaicans, state-sponsored refugees are represented by Cubans, and asylum seekers are represented by Guatemalans, Hondurans and Nicaraguans. The inherent variation in the contexts of reception of immigrants and the political relationships between sending and host societies provides further incentive for the examination of the economic incorporation of immigrants based on their national origin.

D*uration of Residence* is the most direct measure of assimilation because it captures the length of time that immigrants have been exposed to and participating in US social institutions and the labor market since their first entry to the United States. This

[16]Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua were combined because of the similar frequency and proportions of immigrants from these countries in the pooled sample.

variable is coded as 0 to 5 years; 6 to 10 years; 11 to 15 years; 16 to 20 years and 21 plus years. Non-immigrants, who will be otherwise referred to as US natives, are the reference category in all years[17]. The duration of residence variable is included only in the pooled models that control for year of the Census.

Control variables

Prevailing *economic conditions* are captured by dummy coding of the Census years (i.e., 1980, 1990 and 2000) in the linked dataset. *Gender* differences are captured by dummy variables for males and females with the latter being the reference category. *Marital status* is captured with a series of dummy variables of married (includes persons whose spouse is present as well as those with an absent spouse), separated/divorced/widowed (all three categories of observations are combined into a single variable), and single/never married, which serves as the reference category. The *presence of children in the household* is coded as a dummy variable, with no children present as the reference category, versus having at least one child present in the household. Marriage and children have been shown to dampen employment for women (Read and Cohen 2007).

Regional differences in economic and employment conditions are addressed by incorporating a categorical variable for *region* that separates the US into Northeast, South, West and Midwest regions, the latter being the reference category. Employment opportunities can differ by region and different immigrant groups are also concentrated in different regions, thus ethnic and national origin differentials in employment may be

[17] U.S. natives are those whose citizenship status identified as US citizen at birth. All duration categories include observations for persons whose identified citizenship status was both naturalized and noncitizen.

owed, in part, to regional residence. *Disability* is also taken into account through a dummy variable coded as 0, the reference category, for persons reporting no disability that affects work status, and 1 for persons with a disability that limits or prevents working.

Finally, controls for school enrollment are also included following Mare and Winship (1984) who observed that increased school enrollment and later ages of school leaving provide some explanation for racial differences in joblessness between young Blacks and Whites.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

Description of Sample

Table 1 shows the proportional distribution of employment, unemployment and nonparticipation across human capital, nativity, assimilation and demographic indicators. Among native minority groups, nonparticipation is highest for Puerto Ricans at 34 percent, which is nearly twice the rate for non-Hispanic Whites. Non-Hispanic Blacks have the second highest rate of nonparticipation at 26.7 percent. The proportion of native Cubans out of the labor force is on par with the majority non-Hispanic White population- nearly 20 percent. All native minorities are more likely to be unemployed compared to non-Hispanic Whites. Non-Hispanic Blacks have the highest unemployment at 7 percent followed by Puerto Ricans – 6 percent of their population. Native Mexicans' and Cubans' levels of unemployment are at 5 and 4 percent of their populations, respectively.

Comparing the foreign born to the native majority, foreign born Mexicans and Guatemalans/Hondurans/Nicaraguans are most likely to be unemployed and out of the labor force. Foreign born Mexicans' rate of unemployment (6 percent) is twice that of native non-Hispanic whites (3 percent) and they are about 12 percent more likely than the latter to be out of the labor force. Guatemalan/Honduran/Nicaraguan immigrants are similar to Mexicans in their rates of unemployment and nonparticipation. Foreign born

Table 1: Weighted Percentage Distribution of Nativity, Human Capital and Demographic Characteristics Across Employment Status for all Working Age Persons 25-59 years, 1980 to 2000

	Employed	Unemployed	NILF
% total pooled sample	71.0	4.6	24.5
Age mean	39.0	37.5	40.2
Nativity/Ethnicity			
% NB NH White	77.5	3.1	19.5
% NB NH Black	66.5	6.8	26.7
% NB NH Other	71.0	5.5	23.5
% NB Mexican	70.2	5.0	24.8
% Puerto Rican	60.2	5.8	34.0
% NB Cuban	77.4	3.5	19.1
% NB Other Hispanic	69.1	4.7	26.2
Nativity/Ethnicity			
% FB Mexican	61.7	6.2	32.1
% FB G/H/N	65.7	6.0	28.3
% FB Cuban	71.7	4.7	23.6
% FB Jamaican	78.3	5.3	16.5
% FB Other LAC	66.8	5.7	27.5
Duration US Residence			
% US Natives	74.0	4.0	22.0
% 0-5 years	60.6	6.9	32.5
% 6-10 years	63.2	6.3	30.5
% 11-15 years	63.9	6.0	30.2
% 16-20 years	65.4	5.9	28.7
% 21 or more years	66.6	5.1	28.3
English Fluency			
% Speak Only English	75.4	3.7	20.9
% Speak English very well	71.5	4.8	23.7
% Speak English well	65.4	5.4	29.2
% Do not speak English well	59.0	6.6	34.4
% Do not speak English at all	49.4	8.0	42.6
Highest Education Attained			
% Less than High School	55.1	6.8	38.2
% High School	66.8	5.3	27.9
% 1-3 years College	78.8	3.5	17.7
% 4 or more years College	85.9	2.0	12.1

Table 1 Continued

	Employed	Unemployed	NILF
Census Year			
1980	70.3	4.3	25.4
1990	74.3	5.2	20.6
2000	68.9	4.3	26.8
Gender			
% Women	61.1	4.3	34.7
% Men	80.9	4.9	14.3
Marital Status			
% Married	71.5	3.7	24.8
% Single/Never Married	70.7	6.5	22.8
% SDW	69.0	5.9	25.1
Children			
% No children in HH	72.0	5.0	23.0
% At least 1 child in HH	70.3	4.2	25.5
Health Status			
% No disability	73.6	4.6	21.8
% Disability limits/prevents work	50.8	4.4	44.8
Region			
% Midwest	74.8	4.2	21.0
% Northeast	69.6	4.8	25.6
% South	71.4	4.0	24.7
% West	69.2	5.2	25.5
School Attendance			
% Not enrolled in school	71.0	4.6	24.5
% Currently enrolled	70.9	4.7	24.5
Weighted N	418, 780, 417	26, 869, 042	144, 421, 209

Source: IPUMS USA 5 percent Census Samples 1980, 1990, 2000

Jamaicans have the lowest rates of nonparticipation among the immigrant sample, at 16.5 percent, which is even lower than native non-Hispanic Whites' 19 percent. There is a 4 percent difference between foreign born Cubans' rate of nonparticipation and that of native non-Hispanic Whites. Cubans' and Jamaicans' rates of unemployment (5 percent) are roughly 2 percentage points greater than the rate of the native non-Hispanic White majority.

Regarding assimilation, all immigrants have higher rates of unemployment and nonparticipation relative to natives across their duration of residence in the United Sates. The most recent immigrants, those who have been residing in the United States for less than 6 years, have the highest rates of unemployment and nonparticipation in the labor force, 7 and 32.5 percent, respectively. Longer stays in the United States, however, gradually erode the immigrant labor market disadvantage as evinced by rates of unemployment and non-participation that are lower with every 5 year increment of U.S. residence. Despite the decline, even those immigrants who have been in the United States for 21 years or longer have not attained rates of employment similar to those of natives.

The human capital indicators confirm that higher levels of education and English proficiency are associated with reduced labor market disadvantage. Persons who do not speak English at all are twice as likely as English-only speakers to be unemployed and out of the labor force. Their employment rates are also 26 percent lower than persons who only speak English. Correspondingly, those who have completed 4 or more years of college have the highest employment rates and lowest rates of unemployment and nonparticipation. This in stark contrast to persons not completing high school who have

about three times the rate of unemployment and non-participation of those with higher education.

Differences do indeed exist in unemployment and non-participation among immigrant groups and native minorities relative to the majority non-Hispanic White population. Of the Latin American and Caribbean countries in this sample, foreign born Central Americans have the most disadvantaged employment profile and Jamaicans the most favorable. Further, higher human capital is associated with advantages in the labor market. The multivariate analyses will assess how these differences between majority Whites and racial-ethnic minorities, immigrants and native alike, hold after controlling for human capital, duration of U.S. residence, and demographic factors which influence employment status disparities.

Multivariate Results

Table 2 presents a multinomial logistic regression of employment status for all working persons between the ages of 25 and 59 years over the course of the 1980 to 2000 Census enumerations. The table shows two models, with the first model representing a baseline equation of national origin as the single independent variable. Model 2 includes the three background variables as covariates to identify mediating factors in the relationship between national origin and employment status. For the multinomial logistic regression of employment status, there are two categories of the dependent variable-unemployed and not in the labor force (NILF), which are compared to Employed - the omitted category. Results are expressed as odds ratios relative to the omitted category, which carries a value of 1.0. For national origin and U.S. ancestry, the reference group is

Table 2: Multinomial Logistic Regression of Employment Status: Odds Ratios for Effects of Nativity, Duration of US Residence, Human Capital, and Demographic Indicators on Employment Status for Pooled Sample of Working Age Persons 25-59 years, 1980 to 2000

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Unemployed	NILF	Unemployed	NILF
Age	0.960***	0.886***	0.972***	0.896***
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)
Age squared	1.000***	1.002***	1.000**	1.001***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Census Year (ref. 1980)				
1990	1.063***	0.807***	1.184***	0.935***
	(0.006)	(0.003)	(0.007)	(0.003)
2000	0.882***	0.969***	1.058***	1.252***
	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.006)	(0.004)
Gender (ref. Women)				
Men	0.948***	0.394***	0.902***	0.374***
	(0.005)	(0.001)	(0.004)	(0.001)
Marital Status (ref. Married)				
Single/Never	1.749***	1.121***	1.662***	1.061***
	(0.012)	(0.004)	(0.011)	(0.004)
SDW	1.654***	0.947***	1.549***	0.895***
	(0.010)	(0.003)	(0.010)	(0.003)
Children in HH (ref. No children in HH)				
At least 1 child	1.001	0.880***	0.944***	0.833***
	(0.006)	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.002)
Region (ref. Midwest)				
Northeast	0.903***	1.048***	0.903***	1.046***
	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.005)
South	0.718***	0.966***	0.698***	0.933***
	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.004)
West	0.836***	0.968***	0.878***	1.028***
	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.007)	(0.005)
Health Status (ref. No disability)				
Disability limits/prevents work	1.300***	3.396***	1.190***	3.073***
	(0.019)	(0.012)	(0.009)	(0.011)
School Attendance (ref. Not in school)				
Currently in school	0.835***	1.020***	1.111***	1.417***
	(0.008)	(0.005)	(0.010)	(0.008)

Table 2 Continued

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Unemployed	NILF	Unemployed	NILF
Nativity/Ethnicity (ref. Native NH White)				
Native NH Black	2.311***	1.484***	2.019***	1.309***
	(0.016)	(0.005)	(0.014)	(0.005)
Native NH Other	1.856***	1.314***	1.724***	1.214***
	(0.022)	(0.008)	(0.021)	(0.008)
Native Mexican	1.802***	1.501***	1.302***	1.059***
	(0.018)	(0.008)	(0.015)	(0.007)
Puerto Rican	2.172***	2.178***	1.477***	1.467***
	(0.030)	(0.015)	(0.023)	(0.012)
Native Cuban	1.209***	1.101***	1.179**	1.086**
	(0.069)	(0.032)	(0.068)	(0.032)
Native Other Hispanic	1.716***	1.498***	1.376***	1.186***
	(0.026)	(0.012)	(0.022)	(0.010)
Foreign born Mexican	2.630***	2.319***	1.125***	1.000
	(0.025)	(0.011)	(0.021)	(0.011)
Foreign born Guat./Hond./Nicag.	2.270***	1.738***	1.143***	0.896***
	(0.051)	(0.022)	(0.031)	(0.014)
Foreign born Cuban	1.922***	1.329***	1.296***	0.9864
	(0.041)	(0.014)	(0.035)	(0.015)
Foreign born Jamaican	1.581***	0.707***	1.397***	0.668***
	(0.047)	(0.014)	(0.045)	(0.014)
Foreign born Other LAC	2.107***	1.469***	1.348***	0.9904
	(0.025)	(0.009)	(0.025)	(0.011)
Duration of US Residence (ref.0-5 years)				
6-10 years			0.905***	0.890***
			(0.015)	(0.009)
11-15 years			0.9354***	0.903***
			(0.016)	(0.009)
16-20 years			1.038**	0.904***
			(0.019)	(0.010)
21 or more years			1.085***	0.898***
			(0.019)	(0.009)
English Fluency (ref. Speaks Only English)				
Speaks English very well			1.111***	1.083***
			(0.011)	(0.006)
Speaks English well			1.231***	1.282***
			(0.015)	(0.009)
Does not speak English well			1.486***	1.399***
			(0.020)	(0.011)
Does not speak English at all			2.039***	1.763***
			(0.033)	(0.016)

Table 2 Continued

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Unemployed	NILF	Unemployed	NILF
Highest Education Attained (ref. High School)				
Less than High School			1.312***	1.538***
			(0.010)	(0.006)
1-3 years of College			0.551***	0.481***
			(0.003)	(0.002)
4 or more years College			0.284***	0.297***
			(0.003)	(0.001)
Constant	0.122***	2.967***	0.152***	3.688***
	(0.005)	(0.070)	(0.007)	(0.090)
Pseudo R-Square	0.0665		0.0951	
Chi 2	3.60E+05		4.70E+05	
P	0.00		0.00	
N	4,715,222		4,715,222	

Source: IPUMS USA 5 percent Census Samples 1980, 1990, 2000
*p <.05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

native non-Hispanic Whites.

Model 1 shows the observed foreign born and native minority disparities after controlling for age; economic cycles as represented by Census year; gender; marital status; disability; presence of one's own children in the household (if applicable); region of US residence; and school attendance. The first coefficient in the first column of Model 1 shows that native born Mexicans showed 1.8 times the odds of native non-Hispanic Whites to be unemployed as opposed to employed and 1.5 times the risks of the same reference group to be out of the labor force versus employed. Native Cubans have the lowest risk of weak labor market integration among native minorities at 1.2 and 1.1 times the risks of native non-Hispanic Whites to be unemployed and not participating, respectively. Native non-Hispanic Blacks and Puerto Ricans have twice the odds of native non-Hispanic Whites to be unemployed. Native non-Hispanic Blacks also have 1.5 the odds of the reference group to be out of the labor force, whilst Puerto Ricans are twice as likely as the majority to be out of the labor force. Thus, among native minority groups, Puerto Ricans have the highest risks of labor market disadvantage relative to the native majority, followed closely by non-Hispanic Blacks. These results are consistent with existing literature. By comparison, native Cubans are the most similar to native non-Hispanic Whites in terms of their relative risks of not being fully integrated into the labor market.

Amongst the foreign born, all nationalities display higher risks of unemployment as opposed to employment vis-à-vis the reference category of native non-Hispanic Whites. Mexicans show the highest relative risks of being unemployed at 3 times the

risks of native non-Hispanic Whites. Guatemalan/Honduran/Nicaraguan immigrants' risks of unemployment are 2.3 times those of the majority. Foreign-born Cubans have twice the risks of native non-Hispanic Whites of being unemployed. Foreign born Jamaicans, on the other hand, show the lowest risks of unemployment at 1.6 times the risks of the same referent. Foreign born Jamaicans' odds of being unemployed versus employed were even lower than the same odds for native non-Hispanic Blacks and Puerto Ricans- the two most disadvantaged native minority groups.

The patterns for being out of the labor force are more complicated for interpretation as this employment status can be both voluntary and involuntary. Granted the model already controls for disability, children's presence and school attendance, so being out of the labor force for this set of reasons is accounted for in the model. Other circumstances may allow someone to choose nonparticipation in the labor market due to lesser degrees of economic need to work, or they may be pushed toward nonparticipation as a result of being discouraged with their labor market prospects. Nonetheless, if a person of working age who is also pre-retirement is out of the labor force, as opposed to employed, it often indicates socio-economic disadvantage for the individual as well as the group.

All the foreign born Latin American groups show higher odds of being out of the labor force versus employed, relative to native non-Hispanic Whites. Individuals from Mexico have the highest risks in this category as well, with 2.3 times the odds of the majority to be out of the labor force as opposed to employed. From the Caribbean, Jamaicans' odds of not participating in the labor force are .71 or near 30 percent lower than the same odds for native non-Hispanic Whites. Jamaicans again have the lowest

risks of being out of the labor force among native minorities and the foreign born. This indicates that within the Latin American and Caribbean region, Jamaicans appear to have the most favorable employment position with the lowest odds of being both unemployed and out of the labor force. Relative to native minorities and working age persons of other foreign nationalities, Jamaicans show higher odds of being employed, overall. Conversely, foreign born Mexicans appear to have the most disadvantaged employment status among immigrants from the Latin American Caribbean region; their disadvantage is also pronounced in comparison to native minorities and the majority non-Hispanic White population, with nearly three times the latter's odds of being unemployed and 2.3 times their risks of nonparticipation. Overall, nativity appears critical to one's odds of integrating into the labor market, as evinced by native Cubans' and Mexicans' lower risks of unemployment and nonparticipation compared to their foreign-born co-ethnics. Additionally, Jamaicans, who are predominantly phenotypically similar to native non-Hispanic Blacks, show lower risks of unemployment and nonparticipation relative to US born non-Hispanic Blacks. This implies that, distinct from racial-ethnic distinction, nationality is crucial to labor market integration.

Model 2 shows the results of nativity differences net of duration of US residence and human capital. There are two pronounced patterns in Model 2 relative to Model 1. The primary pattern is the overall reduction in the observed differences among the Latin American and Caribbean countries' and native minorities' odds of unemployment and nonparticipation. Notably, foreign born Mexican immigrants' risks of unemployment are quite similar to Guatemalan/Honduran/Nicaraguan immigrants' risks of unemployment. Furthermore, the risks for both groups are drastically lowered as compared to Model 1,

but remain significantly higher than the native majority. Although magnitude is reduced, stability is maintained across models, with all Latin American and Caribbean countries and native minorities showing higher odds of being unemployed versus employed relative to native non-Hispanic Whites. Native non-Hispanic Blacks' relative risks of unemployment are still twice the risks of the majority. Furthermore, native non-Hispanic Blacks are shown to have the highest risks of being unemployed versus employed of all native and foreign born minorities sampled.

The second striking pattern in Model 2 is that all foreign minority groups' odds of being out of the labor force versus employed are lower than those of native non-Hispanic Whites. Foreign Jamaicans continue to show the lowest risks of nonparticipation of the entire sample of native minorities and foreign born, combined. Their risks of non-participation versus employment are also lowered to 0.67, or 33 percent lower than the native majority. They are followed by foreign born Guatemalan/Honduran/Nicaraguan immigrants who are shown to have about 10 percent lower risks of nonparticipation relative to the majority. Foreign born Mexicans' and Cubans' risks of nonparticipation are not statistically different from the native majority but near parity. Native non-Hispanic Blacks and Puerto Ricans continue to show the highest risks of being out of the labor force at 1.3 and 1.5 times the risks of the majority, respectively.

Thus, when mediating employment related variables are introduced and held constant, native Blacks and Puerto Ricans continue to show the weakest labor market integration. Indeed, in keeping with existing literature on racial/ethnic disparities in labor market and other socio-economic outcomes, the Black population is at a greater disadvantage than the Hispanic population and amongst the latter, Puerto Ricans fare the

worst within the native minority population. Amongst the foreign born, their risks of unemployment are higher than the native majority but their risks of not participating in the labor force are lower than those of the native majority and minority population. After controlling for employment-related mediating factors, foreign born Mexicans show the lowest risks of unemployment, and Jamaicans the highest, but the latter have the lowest risks of not participating in the labor force. The lowered risks of unemployment and non-participation of the foreign born relative to the native majority implies that the relationship between nativity and employment status operates through human capital endowments and the length of time spent in the United States. Overall the foreign born are more likely to be participating in the labor force than both the native majority and minority groups, given their lower risks of nonparticipation. Relative risks of unemployment, however, demonstrate that the foreign born remain less fully integrated into the labor market than the native majority.

The effects of the additional employment related variables on holding a given employment status in Model 2 provide additional insight into the factors that constrain or encourage labor market participation. For foreign born persons, longer durations of stay, greater than five, and up to 15 years, are associated with a lowering of risk of unemployment relative to recent arrivals. Beyond this duration of residence, settled immigrants are more likely than recent arrivals to be unemployed versus employed. Beyond 5 years of U.S. residence, immigrants' risks of not participating in the labor force remain about 10 percent lower than those of recent arrivals. These results suggest that immigrants with longer periods of exposure to U.S. society are more inclined to be participating in the labor force but are less likely to be fully integrated, as indicated by

steady employment. This combination of outcomes contradicts the expectations of conventional assimilation for immigrants over their duration of U.S. residence.

Net of duration of U.S. residence, the degree of English fluency is also telling of one's likely employment status. For persons who speak English very well, their odds of being unemployed and out of the labor force are just barely higher than those of the reference group- 1.1 times the odds of English-only speakers. Conversely, those with absolutely no command of English have twice the odds of being unemployed and 1.8 times the odds of being out of the labor force relative to English-only speakers. It must be noted that every decrement in English fluency corresponds to increasing odds of unemployment and nonparticipation relative to those who only speak English.

Education level is the second indicator of human capital and is independent of English fluency. The most highly educated persons, those with 4 years of college or more, have the lowest odds of being either unemployed or out of the labor force – 70 percent lower odds as compared to those with just a high school education (reference category). In contrast, persons with less than high school education have 1.3 and 1.5 times the odds of the high school educated to be unemployed and out of the labor force versus employed, respectively. Thus, both indicators of human capital, higher levels of education and degree of English fluency, are associated with greater degrees of labor force attachment. Of the two, educational attainment appears to show more direct rewards, in keeping with a long line of literature on the returns to education in the labor market. This supports theoretical expectations that those with higher levels of human capital will have lower odds of being unemployed and out of the labor force.

There are some noteworthy differences across the two models in Table 2. Once accounting for human capital and duration in the United States, foreign born Mexicans have the lowest risks of unemployment amongst the native and foreign born minorities, but levels that are still significantly different from the majority. Foreign born Jamaicans maintain the lowest risks of non-participation of all groups- majority and minority. Nativity and ethnicity present different degrees of penalty and are thus each crucial to labor market integration. Longer durations of residence in the United States improve labor force attachment but do not guarantee integration as measured by employment. Also, human capital, particularly in the form of education, is strongly associated with employment status. To fully assess the assimilation trajectories of the foreign born the next section investigates whether duration of residence has comparable effects for foreign born persons from Latin America and the Caribbean.

Analyses of Latin American and Caribbean immigrants' employment statuses, featured in Table 3, indicate a significant interaction effect between national origin and duration of residence upon employment status. Among Central American immigrants who have resided in the United States for up to 10 years, their risks of unemployment are not significantly different from native non-Hispanic whites' and their risks of being out of the labor force are significantly lower than the same reference group. Lengthier U.S. residence, beyond 10 years, increases the risks of being unemployed by about 30 percent, surpassing the same risks for native non-Hispanic Whites and actually approaching that of native Mexicans and other natives of Hispanic-origin. Foreign born Central Americans, however, consistently have significantly lower risks of non-participation than the native majority and minority co-ethnics. Although foreign born Central American

Table 3: Multinomial Logistic Regression of Employment Status:
Differential Effects of Nativity and Duration of U.S. Residence
Pooled Sample of Working Aged Persons 25-59 Years
1980 to 2000

	Unemployed	NILF
Age	0.971***	0.896***
	(0.002)	(0.001)
Age squared	1.000***	1.001***
	(0.000)	(0.000)
Census Year (ref. 1980)		
1990	1.184***	0.934***
	(0.007)	(0.003)
2000	1.057***	1.250***
	(0.006)	(0.004)
Gender (ref. Women)		
Men	0.901***	0.374***
	(0.004)	(0.001)
Marital Status (ref. Married)		
Single/Never	1.662***	1.061***
	(0.011)	(0.004)
SDW	1.549***	0.895***
	(0.010)	(0.003)
Children in HH (ref. No children in HH)		
At least 1 child	0.943***	0.832***
	(0.005)	(0.002)
Region (ref. Midwest)		
Northeast	0.904***	1.047***
	(0.007)	(0.005)
South	0.697***	0.933***
	(0.005)	(0.004)
West	0.877***	1.027***
	(0.007)	(0.005)
Health Status (ref. No disability)		
Disability limits/prevents work	1.190***	3.073***
	(0.009)	(0.011)
School Attendance (ref. Not in school)		
Currently in school	1.109***	1.416***
	(0.010)	(0.007)

Table 3 Continued

	Unemployed	NILF
Nativity/Ethnicity (ref. Native NH White)		
Native NH Black	2.019***	1.309***
	(0.014)	(0.005)
Native NH Other	1.727***	1.215***
	(0.021)	(0.008)
Native Mexican	1.305***	1.059***
	(0.015)	(0.007)
Puerto Rican	1.479***	1.467***
	(0.023)	(0.012)
Native Cuban	1.179**	1.086**
	(0.068)	(0.032)
Native Other Hispanic	1.379***	1.186***
	(0.022)	(0.010)
Foreign-born Mexican		
0-5 years residence	0.988	0.915***
	(0.021)	(0.011)
6-10 years residence	0.998	0.935***
	(0.020)	(0.010)
11-15 years residence	1.087***	0.933***
	(0.021)	(0.010)
16-20 years residence	1.228***	0.906***
	(0.026)	(0.011)
21 or more years residence	1.324***	0.899***
	(0.024)	(0.009)
Foreign-born Guatemalan/Honduran/Nicag.		
0-5 years residence	1.000	0.729***
	(0.045)	(0.021)
6-10 years residence	0.998	0.751***
	(0.046)	(0.021)
11-15 years residence	1.203***	0.887***
	(0.058)	(0.024)
16-20 years residence	1.239***	0.942
	(0.075)	(0.032)
21 or more years residence	1.353***	0.900**
	(0.084)	(0.029)
Foreign-born Cuban		
0-5 years residence	2.644***	1.561***
	(0.136)	(0.053)
6-10 years residence	1.316***	0.855***
	(0.064)	(0.025)
11-15 years residence	1.106	0.713***
	(0.067)	(0.023)
16-20 years residence	1.174***	0.902***
	(0.056)	(0.022)
21 or more years residence	1.108**	0.829***
	(0.043)	(0.016)

Table 3 Continued

	Unemployed	NILF
Foreign-born Jamaican		
0-5 years residence	1.887***	0.783***
	(0.119)	(0.036)
6-10 years residence	1.382***	0.531***
	(0.088)	(0.025)
11-15 years residence	1.083	0.524***
	(0.070)	(0.022)
16-20 years residence	1.338***	0.638***
	(0.097)	(0.030)
21 or more years residence	1.365***	0.637***
	(0.087)	(0.023)
Foreign-born Other LAC		
0-5 years residence	1.531***	1.135***
	(0.037)	(0.017
6-10 years residence	1.248***	0.825***
	(0.029)	(0.012)
11-15 years residence	1.212***	0.858***
	(0.031)	(0.012)
16-20 years residence	1.347***	0.863***
	(0.037)	(0.013)
21 or more years residence	1.339***	0.897***
	(0.034)	(0.012)
English Fluency (ref. Speaks Only English)		
Speaks English very well	1.111***	1.084***
	(0.011)	(0.006)
Speaks English well	1.223***	1.279***
	(0.015)	(0.009)
Does not speak English well	1.477***	1.396***
	(0.020)	(0.011)
Does not speak English at all	2.051***	1.771***
	(0.034)	(0.017)

Table 3 Continued

	Unemployed	NILF
Highest Education Attained (ref. High School)		
Less than High School	1.312***	1.540***
	(0.010)	(0.006)
1-3 years of College	0.551***	0.481***
	(0.003)	(0.002)
4 or more years College	0.284***	0.296***
	(0.003)	(0.001)
Constant	0.157***	3.697***
	(0.007)	(0.089)
Pseudo R-square		0.095
chi2		4.70E+05
p		0
N		4,715,466

Source: IPUMS USA 5 percent Census Samples 1980, 1990, 2000
*p <.05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

immigrants approach parity with the native majority in their likelihood of being out of the labor force over the course of U.S. residence; they maintain lower risks of holding this status relative to the majority.

Recently arrived Cubans have the highest risks among foreign born and native minorities of being unemployed as opposed to employed – 2.6 times the risks of native non-Hispanic Whites. Over the course of U.S. residence, foreign born Cubans who remain in the United States experience lowered risks of unemployment relative to their newly arrived counterparts, but their risks continue to remain higher than those of the native majority. Foreign born Cubans' risks of being out of the labor force as opposed to being employed were also the highest among recent arrivals, at 1.6 times the same risks for the native majority. These risks are significantly lower among foreign Cubans who have been in the United States for 6 years or longer, and, after 6 years of residence, their risks of non-participation are consistently lower than those of native non-Hispanic Whites. Unlike Central Americans, foreign born Cubans' initially display labor market disadvantage but over time this is lessened, such that after they've resided in the United States for 20 years or longer, Cubans appear the most likely to be as integrated in the labor market as the native majority.

Foreign born Jamaicans' risks of not participating in the labor force are the lowest of all the foreign born and even lower than those of native non-Hispanic Whites throughout their duration of U.S. residence.[18] Their risks of unemployment, however, are persistently higher than the majority. Like Cubans, recent Jamaican arrivals' risks of unemployment are high, similar to native non-Hispanic Blacks, but longer stays in the

[18] Recently arrived Mexicans actually showed the lowest risks of the foreign born, about 30 percent lower than native non-Hispanic Whites, but Jamaicans' risks of non-participation remained the lowest of all the groups for every subsequent interval of US residence.

United States lower these risks by about 50 percent. With time, foreign born Jamaicans' relative risks of being unemployed become quite similar to Central Americans' risks of unemployment. What these multivariate models show is that of nativity and duration of U.S. residence, nativity is a stronger predictor of labor market integration. Overall, the foreign born, relative to the native majority, have lower odds of being employed and achieving parity with the latter, despite their higher levels of participation.

Given the positive contexts of reception, relative to Central Americans, Jamaican and Cuban foreign born persons were theoretically expected to show greater propensities for conventional assimilation, with narrowing risks of being unemployed and out of the labor force over lengthier durations of US residence. Seminal studies of immigrant economic incorporation (Chiswick 1978, 1979), which controlled for individual level characteristics, have shown that by 15 years' residence, immigrants achieve parity with native non-Hispanic Whites in their annual earnings. This was especially the case for Cuban immigrants unlike Mexican immigrants (Waters and Eschbach 1995, Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Similar results are presented by this analysis of employment status. Overall, foreign born Cubans and Jamaicans have higher likelihoods of being unemployed relative to native non-Hispanic Whites, but these risks are narrowed with longer durations of stay in the United States and their risks of nonparticipation are lower than the majority over their duration. In concert, with Chiswick's earlier studies, the Cuban experience is most consistent with the expectations of conventional assimilation. By 20 years' U.S. residence, Cuban immigrants approach parity with the native non-Hispanic White population's odds of being unemployed. Distinct from Cuban immigrants, Jamaicans' risks of unemployment are lowered over time but in a nonlinear

fashion and do not approach parity with the native majority. There is no clear cut explanation for this. Jamaicans' risks of unemployment actually become similar to those of native Hispanics, other than Mexicans, Cubans and Puerto Ricans, for those who stay beyond 20 years. This may be indicative of potential downward assimilation because they are as prone to weak labor market integration as a native minority. Subsequently, Jamaicans can be placed at risk of having lower socio-economic status relative to the native majority non-Hispanic White population. Absolute downward assimilation, however, is conditional upon other factors, such as residential patterns.

Central American immigrants were expected to have greater propensity for downward assimilation with higher likelihoods of unemployment and non-participation over their duration of US residence. This also is not fully supported by patterns observed for foreign born Mexicans and Guatemalans/Hondurans/Nicaraguans. The likelihood of nonparticipation in these groups at all intervals of U.S. residence was persistently lower than that of the native majority and minority groups. Central Americans' propensity for downward assimilation is seen in their increasing risks of unemployment with more extended duration of U.S. residence. With time in the United States, Central American immigrants' risks of unemployment worsen and approach those of Mexicans and other native Hispanics.

The overall picture shows group differences in unemployment trajectories support segmented assimilation. Foreign born Cubans display the greatest propensity for conventional assimilation while Central American immigrants, as indicated by their increasing risks of unemployment over their duration of residence, actually gravitate toward a downward path. Jamaicans and Cubans, while their risks of unemployment

lessen with greater duration of U.S. residence, still remain at greater risk of unemployment than the native born, non-Hispanic White majority. As theoretically expected, the economic assimilation trajectories of immigrants are not uniform. National origin, among other factors, influences the avenue of assimilation that an immigrant is likely to follow. The greater likelihood of unemployment for Central Americans and Jamaicans, despite their higher levels of participation, provides an example of the double disadvantage theory which holds that minority status and immigrant status, combined, translate into worse labor market experiences relative to native non-Hispanic Whites and native minority groups , for some immigrant groups (De Jong and Madamba 2001).

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

This study intended to assess differentials in the risks of unemployment and non-participation of Latin American and Caribbean immigrants in the United States as a function of their national origin and their time spent in the United States. The findings show that national origin differences in employment status do exist. Moreover, the relationship between time spent in the United States and employment status also differs by national origin. The study thus supports the arguments of segmented assimilation theorists that assimilation is not a uniform process, and more importantly, that the potential for eventual downward assimilation or conventional assimilation differs by national origin.

According to segmented assimilation theory, which maintains that, immigrant incorporation is contingent on the modes of incorporation and contexts of reception faced by different nationalities, national origin differences were expected to show Central Americans – Mexicans, Guatemalan/Honduran/Nicaraguans – having higher odds of unemployment and nonparticipation in the labor force relative to native non-Hispanic Whites. Hence, they are expected to experience an overall lack of labor market integration over their duration of U.S. residence. This expectation was due, in part, to these groups' less favorable contexts of reception and lower levels of human capital,

thereby creating a greater propensity for downward assimilation. Conversely, Jamaican and Cuban immigrants were expected to have lower relative risks of unemployment and non-participation in the labor force compared to Central American immigrants and to approach the risks of native non-Hispanic Whites over their duration of residence. More conventional assimilation was expected for immigrants from these two countries because Cubans are predominantly state-sponsored refugees and are likely to settle in prosperous and expansive ethnic enclaves that provide mutual support, economic and otherwise. Likewise, Jamaicans also have cohesive successful ethnic communities, high human capital and are characterized by legal entry thus giving them greater access to the mainstream labor market. These factors, it was anticipated, can potentially circumvent any disadvantage brought on by racial discrimination. Given the emphasis on contexts of exit and reception in the literature, national origin differences in economic assimilation were further expected for economic migrants- Mexicans and Jamaicans, versus politically-driven migrants- Cubans and Guatemalan/Honduran/Nicaraguan immigrants.

Analyses of labor force attachment indicate some degree of support for these expectations of differential economic assimilation by national origin. Over the course of U.S. residence, all Latin American and Caribbean origin immigrants are more inclined to be participating in the labor force, than both the native majority and minority groups. This higher labor market participation, however, does not necessarily translate into increased integration as measured by low levels of unemployment. Central American immigrants showed greater propensity for downward assimilation than their Caribbean counterparts. Mexicans and Guatemalan/Honduran/Nicaraguan immigrants did not show any narrowing in their odds of unemployment over time relative to the native majority. In

fact, net of human capital and other demographic factors, Central American immigrants' risks of unemployment increased with longer durations of residence in the United States and began to approach those of native minority groups. Central American immigrants who stayed beyond 10 years in the United States have higher risks of being unemployed relative to native non-Hispanic Whites. These findings are similar to earlier studies on the economic incorporation of immigrants from Latin America based on analyses of earnings. These previous studies, both those that control for education and other forms of human capital, and those that assess the differential returns to education on earnings, persistently showed that comparably educated Mexican and Latin American immigrants earned less than natives and immigrants of other nationalities. More importantly, Mexicans' earnings gap, relative to natives and other immigrants, showed no evidence of declining with greater durations of US residence (see Portes and Rumbaut 2006, 90-91 for detailed reviews).

Conventional economic assimilation for Cubans and Jamaicans is also not fully supported. Cubans and Jamaicans do not show lower odds of unemployment, relative to Central American immigrants and natives, over the two decades covered by the data. Rather, the results have shown that both groups have higher odds of unemployment than native non-Hispanic Whites over their duration of U.S. residence. Relative to the foreign-born Jamaican - non-Hispanic White gap in unemployment over time, the foreign born Cuban - non-Hispanic White gap became narrower over Cubans' duration of US residence. Foreign born Cubans' risks of unemployment were much lower than Jamaicans' risks for those who stayed in the United States for over 5 years. Whereas immigrant Cubans' risks of unemployment narrow and begin to approach the risks of the

native non-Hispanic White population, immigrant Jamaicans' risks of unemployment, though lowered over their duration, become more similar to those of native Hispanic minorities and foreign born Central Americans.

Jamaicans, Mexicans, and Guatemalans/Hondurans/Nicaraguans experience risks of unemployment similar to those of native minorities. Foreign born Cubans appear the most likely to assimilate in the conventional sense. Thus, economic and asylum-seeking immigrants showed greater propensities for downward assimilation, whereas state-sponsored refugees showed propensity for conventional assimilation toward the native majority group. This reinforces the salience of immigrants' national origins, more so than their characteristic motivations for immigrating, for their economic incorporation while in the host society. Cubans, who, compared with all of the nationalities featured in the study, are faced with the most favorable contexts of reception in the United States, are best positioned for labor market integration. Less supportive contexts of reception for Jamaicans relative to Cubans, and especially Central Americans, may mean that they are not able to realize comparable success in their job searches.

While important, these findings do not address variation by national origin in broader aspects of economic assimilation into US society. Local variations in employment contexts, such as state-level unemployment rates, are not reflected in the present study. Moreover, information on residence in ethnic enclaves (Sanders and Nee 2002, Model and Fisher 2007) and industry of employment are not available, but these factors are likely to influence national origin groups' variation in employment patterns. New immigrants, who are predominantly from Mexico and Central America, may be more likely to settle in ethnic enclaves that are sometimes densely settled with their co-

nationals. Some enclaves are characterized by high rates of joblessness, but others may be vibrant ethnic economies with rich social capital making job openings readily accessible, despite competition.

Furthermore, these results cannot capture any contributions of circular and return immigration on aggregate employment patterns across the 10 year intervals of the Census. Group differences in the risks of unemployment and nonparticipation over time may reflect the degree of immigrant permanence or transience that characterizes a particular country's migration system. The confounding of different immigrant cohorts in this pooled sample makes it highly probable that the changing composition and experiences of different immigrant cohorts leads to an overstating or understating of the risks of unemployment and nonparticipation for these countries. Thus, disaggregation of the foreign born by period of arrival to the United States will be an invaluable addition in future assessments of labor market integration. Immigrant cohorts may differ in their human capital endowments upon entry, their settlement patterns, and face different political and economic contexts, which may have important implications for their subsequent courses of integration. Differences by nationality can also be an artifact of improved coverage by census enumerators with the possibility of capturing more unauthorized migrants, amongst different immigrant cohorts of Central Americans and Jamaicans, who are more susceptible to weak integration.[19]

In line with this, the periods covered in the present study, 1980 to 2000, were characterized by significant economic restructuring from manufacturing to service-based employment, trends that favored more highly skilled workers versus those with low skill

[19] The coverage of the U.S. Census improved over the years especially from 1990 to 2000. Simultaneously, undercounts of the foreign-born, generally, and under coverage by legal status more specifically, can range from 15 to 20 percent of the population (Costanzo, Davis, Irazi, Goodkind, Ramirez 2001).

levels. This entailed the movement of jobs from inner cities to the suburbs and overseas, which significantly impacted the employment opportunities of minorities- both immigrants and natives (Jaret 1991, Browne 1997). The early 1990s were marked with a recession but the economy recovered dramatically by 2000 with unemployment rates falling, overall, between 1992 and 2000 (Su 2001). These macro-economic conditions have implications for the higher risks of nonintegration that are observed among immigrants and native minorities, and especially for immigrants who may have entered the United States on the cusp of economic restructuring and/or recession and thus been more vulnerable to unemployment.

This is not to say that those immigrants who would have already been settled would not be equally vulnerable, as they may have been employed in industries where significant downsizing occurred. They may also have been more likely than recent arrivals to have greater knowledge of alternative employment opportunities, given their length of exposure to U.S. society. Another consideration is that recently arrived legal and unauthorized migrants do not qualify for public support during economic downturns so they are forced to remain attached to the labor force to support themselves and their families. Recently arrived immigrants may be more geographically mobile than both settled immigrants and native minorities. This can provide opportunities for employment both in the formal and underground economies (Papademetriou and Terrazas 2009). At present, it is unclear whether longer settled or recently arrived immigrants are more vulnerable to fluctuations in business cycles. The implications of these macro-economic conditions on the labor market experiences of immigrants from Latin America and the

Caribbean would be enhanced by addressing immigrant arrival cohort differences across countries in each census period.

Thus, immigrant cohort coupled with the varying economic and political cycles of 1980, 1990, 2000, especially in the context of changing immigration policy; bear heavily on the economic assimilation trajectories of these immigrant groups. Deeper assessment of labor market integration differentials by national origin will have to include analysis of arrival cohorts' experiences in separate census years. Cohort and period assessments also disentangle the possibilities of selective circular and return migration for different national origins.

Notwithstanding these limitations, these findings highlight the salience of national origin for an immigrant's economic adaptation. The context of reception by both the government and the larger native population differs by national origin, which has implications for immigrants' labor market experiences and subsequent economic mobility. Mexicans' higher risks of unemployment relative to natives, over their duration of U.S. residence, may be attributed to other factors both directly and not directly assessed in this study. The lower human capital that characterizes the foreign born Mexican immigrant sample both in the form of English fluency and educational attainment, could contribute to these higher likelihoods of joblessness. Higher levels of education attainment and a greater command of English were both shown to be crucial for labor market integration. Although low human capital does not mean a Mexican will be unable to secure employment, it relegates persons with low human capital to jobs that are easily expendable during economic downturns. Latin American immigrants, along with South East Asian immigrants, are least represented in the high level occupations

(Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Thus, Mexicans and other Latin American immigrants may be active in the labor force but weakly attached (as indicated by their odds of unemployment).

Aside from relatively low levels of human capital, the foreign born Central American sample examined here consists largely of noncitizens;[20] and, compared to Cubans and Jamaicans, a greater proportion are likely to be undocumented.[21] This provides the possibility of Central Americans' lack of labor market integration, as a group, being heavily influenced by the presence and experience of unauthorized populations. Attaining U.S. citizenship by naturalization is indicative of one's wider integration into U.S. society. Naturalization is indicative of structural assimilation by making efforts to attain U.S. citizenship, and this, according to Milton Gordon (1964), will make all other forms of assimilation or incorporation into the host society more likely (Alba and Nee 2003). This structural assimilation can position an individual more favorably in their job hunt as they will likely be more familiar with the workings of the labor market, have more open access to a range of employment, and possibly have a broader range of U.S. contacts in different local labor markets and more stable sectors. The data used for this study allows no systematic means of determining legal status, nor its contribution to the observed group differences in labor market assimilation.

Lower levels of human capital, coupled with non-U.S. citizenship, can position persons at a gross disadvantage in the job hunt both in terms of the jobs to which one is

[20] See Appendix. Unauthorized migration is also noted for Jamaica but relative to Central Americans, Jamaican illegal immigrants are reported to be more successful at attaining legal status in the long run (Vickerman 2007)

[21] (Bean and Lowell 2007) Unauthorized migration from Mexico has been occurring since the 1970s as Mexico's largely agricultural economy began losing its vitality but has really escalated from the late 1990s to present.

relegated and also simply not finding jobs due to a lack of marketability. Central American immigrants are disproportionately employed in sectors that are most vulnerable to business cycles such as hospitality and construction and other low value-added jobs.[22] Hence, other influential factors not directly accounted for in this study, such as the industry or labor market sector of work, and contextual factors such as anti-immigrant sentiments and discrimination in hiring, may further exacerbate Central Americans' lack of labor market incorporation.

Jamaicans' low likelihoods of being out of the labor force are not unusual as Jamaican immigrants have been shown to have rates of multiple earners per household that surpass levels seen in the households of African Americans and Whites.[23] It is also characteristic of Jamaicans to hold multiple jobs concurrently. This is in light of their economic motivations for migration to the United States and the practical need to compensate for low income jobs (Vickerman 2007). The increasing risks of unemployment of Jamaicans with longer length of time spent in U.S. society, nonetheless, is inconsistent with wider bodies of research finding that English-speaking West Indian immigrants' economic success often surpasses that of native minorities (Kalmijn 1996; Model 2008). These studies, however, compared West Indians to African Americans to capture to some extent the effect of racial distinction, among other features, on West Indian success. To some degree, the results of this study do show some similarity in the labor market experiences of these two groups. Foreign born Jamaicans,

[22] (Paapademetriou and Terrazas 2009, 14). "Studies show Hispanic workers suffered more job losses than non-Hispanic workers during the 1991 recession."

[23] In Milton Vickerman's (2007: 480) review of Jamaicans' economic adaptation to the US, it is stated that the labor force participation rate of Jamaican women and men in 200 was 69 percent and 74 percent, respectively, and their households. He further notes "In Florida….22 percent of Jamaican households contain three or more individuals who are active in the workforce, compared to 13 and 15 percent of white and African American households, respectively."

English speaking West Indians, do have lower risks of unemployment and nonparticipation compared to non-Hispanic Blacks. Their higher risks of unemployment and the similarity to native Hispanic minorities net of other individual level characteristics, however, still suggest that discrimination, racial and/or otherwise, may be a real obstacle to their full labor market integration.

The question of how immigrants' employment status over time spent in the US compares to US natives cannot be answered simply in one sentence or even one study because immigrants are not homogeneous. Their economic integration is time dependent, both in terms of when they enter the United States and how long they stay in the United States, and it also varies widely by national origin. Previous studies that have assessed immigrant economic assimilation based on earnings growth over time showed mixed results of assimilation to the native majority and highlighted the fact that conventional assimilation is contingent on national or regional origin. The results of this study are consistent with this past research- immigrant labor market integration is contingent on these factors.

Close examination of Mexican and Cuban immigrants' economic assimilation testifies to the importance of national origin. The differences between Mexicans' and Cubans' labor market integration seems to reflect differences in U.S. immigration policies towards these groups. Aside from differing immigration policies toward certain national origins, human capital, social capital, legal status and reception by the host society also vary by national origin, all of which impinge on the extent of full labor market integration and subsequent economic well-being. This study also highlights that reliance on earnings as a measure of group differentials in economic assimilation may be

limiting because it does not disaggregate the contribution of group differences in stable employment. It follows that existing studies finding mixed results for immigrant economic assimilation based on earnings differentials may be reflective of the group differences in employment status. Accordingly, future studies of immigrant economic assimilation should disaggregate immigrants by nationality and account for variations in their labor force attachment.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

In the context of this study, if immigrants' life chances were to improve over their duration of U.S. residence, this would be shown by lowered relative risks of unemployment and nonparticipation in the labor force. While immigrants' propensities for joblessness are expected to be higher especially during their initial year(s) of arrival, because of a lack of familiarity with the nuances of the US labor market and a lack of economic contacts, for instance (Meisenheimer 1992), it is further expected that this gap in joblessness between immigrants and natives will narrow and even disappear with longer duration of residence (Chiswick et al. 1997). This was not fully observed among the foreign born from Latin America and the Caribbean.

Overall, the findings show that longer duration of residence in the US decreases the likelihoods of unemployment for some immigrant groups but all groups do not achieve parity with non-Hispanic Whites in their likelihood of being employed. The results presented are consistent with descriptive estimates of the labor force participation of the foreign born. Overall, labor force participation rates of the foreign born have been similar to natives, 66 versus 67 percent, respectively, but unemployment rates tend to vary by immigrants' region of origin, with immigrants of European origin having the

lowest unemployment rates while those of Latin American and Caribbean origins, the highest[24] (Schmidley and Gibson 1999; Schmidley 2001).

Despite several limitations, the study provides insight into the significant contribution of employment status patterns, as well as the importance of assessing within-group differences by nationality, to our overall assessment of the economic assimilation of immigrants. Employment status gives us more grounded indication of individual and structural factors that contribute to economic inequality in earnings and wider socio-economic inequality between groups. For instance an individual can neither control his/her earnings nor being unemployed, for the most part, but they may have more control over their labor market participation. Thus, it is argued to be quite useful to understand group dynamics of involuntary joblessness or withdrawal especially for working age, able bodied persons. This gives us a broader frame for understanding other, sometimes taken for granted, inequality dynamics such as group differences in earnings, savings, and the ability to prepare for retirement. If immigrants' work histories have been severely disadvantaged, and they have not been able to save for themselves and younger generations, this can potentially impose a strain on government welfare spending. Disadvantaged work histories may also have implications on the health status of immigrants, which can compound individual debt and government spending on social services. This signals a call for future assessment of the underlying mechanisms for group differences in susceptibility to involuntary joblessness and non-participation within and across generations.

[24] (Schmidley 2001, 45).As of March 2000, the unemployment rate ranged from "2.3 percent for European and 3.5 percent for Asian foreign- born workers to 7.3 percent for Mexican and 7.2 percent for Caribbean foreign-born workers."

Empirical examinations of the interactive effects of immigrant arrival cohort, national origin, human capital and contextual factors on immigrants' labor market outcomes are rare in the current literature. Thus, future research on segmented assimilation in labor market integration should also include assessment of the differential returns to education by cohort of arrival for each national origin group. This can best be accomplished with longitudinal data to better assess causality for the differential avenues of assimilation for immigrants over time and generations.

APPENDIX

WEIGHTED PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTIONS OF SELECTED EMPLOYMENT STATUS RELATED VARIABLES BY NATIVITY & ETHNICITY, 25 TO 59 YRS 1980 TO 2000

	Native NH White	FB Mexican	FB G/H/N	FB Cuban	FB Jamaican	FB Other LAC
Employment Status						
% Employed	77.5	61.7	65.7	71.7	78.3	66.8
% Unemployed	3.1	6.2	6.0	4.7	5.3	5.7
% Not in the Labor Force	19.5	32.1	28.3	23.6	16.5	27.5
Citizenship Status						
% US citizen at birth	100.0					
% Naturalized	0.0	25.5	25.1	54.8	48.2	33.3
% Not a citizen	0.0	74.6	74.9	45.2	51.8	66.7
English Fluency						
% Speak Only English	96.8	4.7	4.3	4.6	92.5	7.1
% Speak English very well	2.6	20.2	24.2	38.9	5.2	29.2
% Speak English well	0.4	22.8	26.6	22.2	1.7	27.6
% Do not speak English well	0.2	31.7	29.6	21.6	0.4	25.5
% Do not speak English at all	0.0	20.5	15.3	12.7	0.2	10.7
Highest Education Attained						
% Less than High School	4.0	51.0	33.9	18.3	8.6	21.9
% High School	43.3	35.3	40.4	39.9	46.2	41.4
% 1-3 years College	27.0	9.7	17.1	22.6	27.7	21.8
% 4 or more years College	25.7	4.0	8.6	19.2	17.6	15.0
Weighted N	253,698,290	92,087,384	9,539,571	12,599,134	700,028	36,460,663

Source: IPUMS USA 5 percent Census Samples 1980, 1990, 2000

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